

NCOs Assume Increased Role In Risk Management

By SGM Charlie Mahone

Taking America's Army into the 21st century requires everyone to revise their way of thinking about "risk management."

Present and future changes dictate that NCOs be proficient in understanding situation awareness and operational surroundings, for they often will find themselves making key recommendations to their commanders and staff. NCOs must totally comprehend all the details needed to complete each step in the military decision-making process. To help you grasp this risk management process, the Army Safety Center has published a "Risk Management for Brigade and Battalion" technical report, TR95-1, December 1994. The report is available from your local safety office or the Army Safety Center.

The "Leader's Guide to Force Protection through Risk Management," October, 1995, is also available from your safety office. Earlier attempts to integrate risk management into training and operations were extremely complicated and this guide simplifies the process. Tactics, techniques and procedures were field-tested by MTO&E units during CTC rotations. And they work.

Historically, accidents seriously strain operational assets. The strain will continue if we don't get risk management applications into the hands of NCOs.

NCOs at every level are tasked during development of TTPs to minimize accident losses while preserving war-fighting capability. Routinely, staff NCOs (especially operations sergeants) will be required to assess how well a unit's performance meets the commander's safety guidance. The more knowledgeable NCOs are at analyzing all the components of a mission and being able

to determine how they will affect their unit's mission (from a risk management viewpoint), the better they're able to make valid recommendations.

Today, we find NCOs providing risk management input during the estimate of the situation. In most cases this is nothing more than a logical hazard examination of all factors affecting the accomplishment of the mission. At the brigade or battalion level, this implies that throughout the military decision-making process NCOs will provide vital input as courses of action are being formulated.

Specific information from an NCO perspective enhances the planning, execution and after-action results of any operation.

The Safety Center plans to work closely with TRADOC to fully integrate risk management topics using the crawl-walk-run method through the CSMC.

Risk Management for Brigades and Battalions



USASC Technical Report TR95-1
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Integration of Risk Management Into Decision-Making Process

Mission Risk Management

1. Perform Hasty Risk Assessment
 - A. Gather and analyze METT-T facts to identify most severe and most probable hazards
 - B. Complete risk assessment for each Course of Action (COA)
 - C. Enter risk level of each COA as a decision criterion
2. Perform Deliberate Risk Management
 - A. Make risk decision for selected COA—accept risk level or elevate decision
 - B. Identify and select controls for most severe and most probable hazards/accidents
 - C. Communicate and implement controls—integrate into paragraphs and graphics of OPORD
 - D. Supervise—monitor/enforce controls

Tactical Decision Making

1. Receive mission
2. Gather and consider information
3. Complete mission analysis, restate mission and issue planning guidance
4. Complete staff estimates
 - A. Develop/Analyze/Compare COAs (Wargame)
 - B. Recommend COA
5. Complete commander's estimate
 - A. Analysis of COAs
 - B. Decision (Select COA)
- C. Concept of operation (Make risk decision and select controls)
6. Prepare
7. Approve
8. Issue
9. Supervise

Plans/Orders

Responsibilities Process

With all of the changes in the Army, many of our NCOs don't have the years of experience that develop an intuitiveness about risk management. Often, those years of experience have provided both good and bad situations and we've learned how to be more safety-conscious in our duties. So, if you've never "been there," or "done that," it's hard to relate to a given situation. This is where risk management training will fill the gap.

The example below shows a technique used to apply all the tools of risk management against your unit's METL under several possible conditions. ■

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Reasons For Accident Risk in METL Tasks

- (a) TRANSITION TO MISSION-MEDIUM RISK
 - First mission ■ Many inexperienced/untrained crews
- (b) DEPLOY/REDEPLOY—HIGH RISK
 - First and last mission ■ Fatigue and many hours of driving ■ 100-plus vehicles in convoy, 80-plus vehicles by rail ■ German roads in adverse weather ■ New crews and leaders (rail loading experience) ■ Too many distractors
- (c) PERFORM TACTICAL ROAD MARCH—MEDIUM RISK
 - Tired soldiers anticipating next mission ■ German roads in adverse weather
- (d) MEETING ENGAGEMENT—HIGH RISK
 - Maneuver in highly fluid environment ■ Untrained/inexperienced personnel ■ All new drivers, little time in vehicles practicing maneuvers ■ Minimal training between crews and squads ■ Too many distractors ■ New soldiers not trained to fight as a crew
- (e) ATTACK—HIGH RISK
 - Moving fast ■ Night/early morning, little sleep, late in rotation ■ Untrained/inexperienced personnel ■ New drivers in all vehicles, little time in vehicles practicing maneuvers ■ Handling of demolitions, increased use of heavy equipment
- (f) DEFEND—MEDIUM RISK
 - Long hours with little rest ■ Untrained personnel
- (g) PEACEKEEPING/ENFORCEMENT—HIGH RISK
 - New mission (confusion) ■ Civilians on battlefield around vehicles ■ Decentralized operations (platoons and squads on their own) ■ Sleep deprivation ■ New soldiers not task trained ■ Route clearing, mines, etc. (Cbt Eng) ■ Soldier discipline

Mission

A mechanized infantry battalion task force received a mission to deploy into a zone of separation established by the U.N. to execute peacekeeping operations. The deployment required execution of a tactical road march while refueling on the move (ROM).

It's important to remember that the staff's purpose in the decision-making process is to develop courses of action and make recommendations so the commander can select the best means for successful mission accomplishment. It is hoped that everyone has read how risk management has become part of our doctrinal cornerstone. It's embedded throughout such documents as FMs 100-5, 101-5, 25-100 and 25-101.

The approved final draft of FM 101-5 assigns force protection (safety) as a functional area under the coordinating staff responsibilities within the G3/S3. The Army's doctrinal process for identifying and controlling hazards is "risk management." During planning and execution of the mission, staff NCOs use risk management procedures to identify and control METT-T hazards.

Integration of risk management into the nine steps of decision making also requires that NCOs understand how to perform both hasty and deliberate risk management. When time is limited, the steps are streamlined with increased reliance on the experience of the command and staff.

Hasty Risk Assessment

The battalion had recently trained for ROM using organic assets. The brigade assumed responsibility for establishing the ROM and published the procedures as part of the brigade OPORD. The S-3 pointed out that the battalion had never rehearsed a ROM using the technique designated by the brigade. There wasn't time for the battalion to retrain and rehearse the new ROM technique before the start of movement for the deployment.

After analyzing this mission using the unit's risk management matrix, S-3 determined that the risk level—moving large numbers of heavy, tracked and wheeled vehicles through an unrehearsed ROM on poor roads during inclement weather—was extremely high and would likely result in an accident.

Deliberate Risk Management

After identifying the preferred control option it became impossible for the battalion staff, during Course of Action (COA) development, to rehearse the new ROM technique. Time simply was not available to organize and execute an additional rehearsal.

The battalion commander didn't have the authority to change the brigade's OPORD. He also didn't have the authority to implement the second control option recommended by his XO to execute the ROM as previously trained and rehearsed. He elevated the risk decision to the brigade commander for decision.

The brigade and battalion commanders discussed the hazard and the control option. The brigade commander agreed that the risks outweighed the potential benefits and directed a change in the OPORD to allow the battalion to execute the ROM to trained standard.

In this organization, authority to accept high to extremely high risk resides at the command level that assigned the mission. In this case, the brigade had assigned the mission and the brigade commander was the appropriate level for accepting the risk.

The OPORD was changed and the battalion executed the ROM as rehearsed. Supervision was simplified because duties and procedures were clearly communicated and well understood throughout the chain of command. The ROM was executed without incident and the change of control from brigade to battalion did not adversely affect the mission.